

Spelthorne Borough Council
Spring Bulletin 2017
Issue no. 115

Letter from the Leader of the Council

Dear Residents,

Welcome to the spring edition of our Spelthorne Bulletin. As I have mentioned from the outset, my main priority as Leader is to make sure we are in a strong financial position so that we can protect the services we are elected to provide. Through prudent investments we have succeeded in closing the £3.2m budget gap ahead of schedule.

This doesn't mean the Council is flush with cash. It means that we have borrowed at a low fixed rate to make sound investments which give us valuable assets for the future and generate substantial income to spend on maintaining services and avoiding cuts. We are not resting on our laurels. We foresee further budget pressures in the next 3-4 years of about £1.8m and are acting now to prepare.

I understand that the difference between the County and Borough areas of responsibility can be confusing to residents. Criticism for some of the tough and unpopular decisions that Surrey County Council has had to take have sometimes been unfairly laid at Spelthorne's door. There is a list of the two councils' responsibilities on page 15.

We are here to represent the people who elected us and to that end will do all we can to influence the County in matters of local concern. For example, we knew that a proposed plan to close Staines Fire Station was hugely worrying for residents and lobbied the key people in Surrey for them to honour their promise to keep the fire station open until the new facility in Fordbridge was up and running.

As long-standing supporters of Heathrow, we are pleased that expansion plans have moved a step forward with the Department of Transport announcing a consultation, including local events, encouraging people to have their say. Please see page 15 for more on this.

I recently reiterated my strong opposition to propos our determination to protect the Green Belt for future generations. At the end of 2015 we announced our 'windfall grants' and invited community groups to bid for a share of the £260K being made available. The applications are currently being looked at and we will announce how the money will be allocated in the summer edition of the Bulletin.

Rest assured, my team and I will continue to work tirelessly to promote the best interests of all Spelthorne residents and businesses.

Cllr Ian Harvey, Council Leader.

Bulletin CDs

Audio CDs of the Bulletin are available for blind or partially sighted residents. Please email I.king@spelthorne.gov.uk or call 01784 444260.

eNews - keep in touch

Spelthorne Council produces a monthly electronic newsletter containing Council news, events, planning applications and more.

To receive the newsletter visit www.spelthorne.gov.uk/enews

My Alerts

Sign up to the 'My Alerts' service to receive regular emails from the Council which include rubbish/recycling collection reminders, local planning applications, job vacancies, events and news. To register visit <http://my.spelthorne.gov.uk/?tab=3>

Council meetings

For a list of all the Council meetings, please visit www.spelthorne.gov.uk/councillors-committees and select 'calendar of meetings' or call Committee Services on 01784 451499.

Follow us

Don't forget, you can follow Spelthorne Council on Facebook and Twitter. You can also download our Spelthorne App to report issues, pay bills and keep up-to-date.

Your views

Thank you to all the readers who took the time to complete our survey about the Bulletin in the last edition of the magazine. Congratulations to Mrs Savides from Shepperton who won the £50 M&S voucher.

Farewell from the Mayor

When I was asked to think about writing my final message as Mayor, my reaction was 'where did that year go?!'

Well, of course, as I write there are still a few months to go before we hand over and, as promised when we took on our roles, the Mayoress and I want to use that time to keep Spelthorne sparkling. We look forward to meeting many more Bulletin readers and continuing our visits to the wonderful voluntary organisations in the Borough. Nobody should describe themselves as “only a volunteer”. If you are a volunteer you are one of the most precious assets our community has.

There is still much work for us to do in raising money for our charities and we are hosting a Rhythm'n'Blues night on 10 March and a Masquerade Ball on 8 April. Details are available from the Mayor's Office.

We will continue representing Spelthorne to the wider world and telling everyone what a great place our Borough is to live and work. But now for some words of thanks. Thanks to you all for giving Kaye and I the opportunity to meet so many wonderful people, from those who we joined for Christmas lunch at the Community Centres, to the schools we visited, and also the churches, faith groups and voluntary organisations which do so much for us. Thanks finally to the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Vivienne Leighton and her husband Chris for their support throughout the year.

So is there one occasion from the year which stands out? Yes, there is one institution in our Borough that we visited which is not often mentioned but made a particular impression on both of us and that is HMP Bronzefield in Ashford. Spelthorne can be very proud of the inspiring work that is being done there. So many great institutions and wonderful people crowded into one year.

But finally there is one very important person I should mention as without her love and support I would never have been able to attempt any of this. That is the Mayoress, my wife Kaye. Keep Spelthorne sparkling!

Cllr Alfred Friday, Mayor of Spelthorne.
email mayor.spelthorne.gov.uk or call 01784 446275.

New homes for Spelthorne

Spelthorne Council is currently progressing a number of plans designed to help increase the availability of much needed housing in the Borough and recently purchased the site of the former Bugle Pub in Upper Halliford to build up to ten new flats. The Green Belt land to the rear of the site will be retained and enhanced as a natural habitat.

A planning application was also submitted at the end of last year to develop three two-bedroom homes with car parking on the site of Churchill Hall in Churchill Way, Sunbury-on-Thames. The application has now been approved and work is planned to start on site late summer.

Harper Hotel in Fordbridge Road, Ashford, was bought by the Council last spring and plans are being developed to replace the current building with new accommodation designed specifically for local homeless families. This will reduce the need to place families in bed and breakfast accommodation, which is very expensive for the Council Tax payers.

In addition to residential properties, the Council has also been acquiring business assets which provide a substantial long-term income which can be reinvested in services for residents. Following the purchase of the BP site in Sunbury-on-Thames reported in the last edition of the Bulletin, the Council recently bought Elmbrook House, in Sunbury-on-Thames, for just over £7m. Situated next to Sunbury railway station, the newly refurbished property is occupied by insurance provider, Complete Cover Group, who have a long-term lease.

For more details please email John Hesbrook at j.hesbrook@spelthorne.gov.uk or call 01784 446344.

Landlords in Spelthorne...your Council needs you!

Do you have a property to rent in the Spelthorne area?

Spelthorne Borough Council guarantees to pay full market rent for your property, paid directly to you each month. The Spelthorne Rent Assure scheme helps us match families in need of a home with landlords who want to let their properties without all the usual hassles. The package we offer landlords includes:

- full market rent, paid by the Council directly to you a six week security bond
- free agreement drafting, including an Assured Shorthold Tenancy
- a free professional inventory taken at the start of the tenancy
- viewings with potential tenants arranged at a time that is convenient for you
- training and ongoing support for all prospective tenants

For all enquires please contact the Spelthorne Rent Assure team by email at sra@spelthorne.gov.uk or call 01784 448611.

The future of Kempton Park

In January the Jockey Club and Redrow Homes jointly proposed the closure of Kempton Park Racecourse and building of 3000 homes. The Leader of Spelthorne Council, Cllr Ian Harvey, responded swiftly by writing an open letter

reassuring residents that he and the Council are strongly opposed to development of the Green Belt.

Cllr Harvey said: “Many will recall my open letter to Redrow Homes last April, where I made my opposition, on behalf of the residents of Sunbury and Spelthorne, very clear and the proposal then was for 1500 houses. Nothing has changed except my resolve which has doubled. I cannot understand why the Jockey Club and Redrow continue pushing this hopeless cause.

The reality is that every local planning authority has a statutory duty to maintain an up-to-date ‘Local Plan’ that needs to balance many competing demands including protecting areas of importance. As Spelthorne’s is due for a review we are required to ask land owners to submit details of any sites they wish us to consider for future development. This is what has happened and is called a ‘Call for Sites’.

It will be for the Council, through its new Local Plan, to decide how much development is needed in the future and the most sustainable locations for it to go. It is not bound by any particular proposals that are put forward by developers. The Council expects its Local Plan to be adopted in 2020. I am fully aware of the views of local residents and have consistently made clear my strong opposition to development of this site and my determination to protect the Green Belt in Spelthorne. The Council’s finances are very robust and any suggestion that it needs money from new development is completely groundless.”

Heathrow consultation

In October 2016, the Government announced its support for a new northwest runway at Heathrow and has now launched a 16 week public consultation on a draft National Policy Statement (NPS) which closes on 25 May.

A NPS sets out the policy that applies to decisions on whether major infrastructure projects can go ahead. The consultation is your opportunity to have your say. More information and the consultation feedback form is available at www.gov.uk/dft/heathrow-airport-expansion

Specsavers Surrey Youth Games 2017

Are you aged 7-16? Interested in trying a new sport? Then why not come along to the Team Spelthorne Specsavers Surrey Youth Games free training sessions.

The Surrey Youth Games, sponsored by Specsavers, is the largest annual youth sports festival in Surrey. The main aim of the games is to provide opportunities for young people to try new sports. Around 2000 young people,

aged 7 to 16, will experience a competitive countywide sporting event when they take part in the Games on Saturday 17 and Sunday 18 June 2017.

In preparation for the competition weekend, Spelthorne Council is holding between four and seven weeks of coaching sessions for each sport, which will begin in April. The training sessions are free of charge and offer young people a fantastic opportunity to try a new sport or improve on existing skills.

There are a wide variety of sports on offer, including badminton, boccia, boxing, girls' cricket, girls' football, hockey, judo, lacrosse, netball, squash, swimming, table tennis, girls' rugby, tennis and touch tennis. All sessions will be led by qualified coaches and, from the coaching sessions, teams will be chosen to compete in the Games at Surrey Sports Park in Guildford.

To be eligible for Team Spelthorne you must either live or go to school in Spelthorne and if you already play a sport, you must be below county standard.

You must register in advance of the sessions. Full details about the coaching sessions, age ranges and full eligibility can be found on the website.

Visit www.spelthorne.gov.uk/surreyyouthgames, email leisure@spelthorne.gov.uk or call 01784 446433.

Leisure Directory

Pick up your copy of our 2017 Leisure Directory from your local library, leisure centre, or doctor's surgery. It's packed full of special interest clubs, groups and sporting activities to help you make the most of your leisure time.

You can also download a copy at www.spelthorne.gov.uk/leisuredirectory or call Leisure Services on 01784 446433.

Staines 10k

The 2017 Staines 10k is being held at 9am on Sunday 14 May and starts and finishes outside the Council Offices in Knowle Green.

The race is now full but please come along and cheer on the runners. Further information on the race route is available at www.staines10k.co.uk
Organised by the Staines Strollers and Runnymede

Family Information Service

Visit Surrey County Council's Family Information Service for help finding registered childcare, family activities, holiday clubs and support groups near you.

Visit www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-andcommunity/family-information-service

Spelthorne Local Tennis League

The Spelthorne Local Tennis League is open to adults of all levels and provides the opportunity to play friendly singles matches where and when it suits you. The next round of matches take place from 20 April - 14 June 2017 with further rounds held later in the year.

Find out more or join for only £15 at www.localtennisleagues.com/spelthorne

Quit 51

Quit 51 is Surrey's free stop smoking service. Developed by experts and delivered by specially trained and highly experienced professionals, this completely free service provides advice, support and encouragement to help you stop smoking for good. 100% of smokers who have used the service would recommend it.

For more information, please call 0800 622 6968, text smokefree to 66777 or visit www.quit51.co.uk

Xplorer family orienteering

Xplorer is the perfect outdoor activity for families, offering a friendly navigation challenge that is educational and fun.

Using a simple map, the aim is to find a number of markers that are located around the park. At each marker children need to identify what is pictured and enjoy learning a fun fact to tell their friends. Older children will have fun competing against their friends or other family members whilst younger children will enjoy the excitement of successfully finding the markers.

No experience of map reading is necessary and parents are encouraged to join in the fun!

The events are free and take place from 10.30am - 12.30pm on the following dates:

Thursday 6 April: Clockhouse Lane, Ashford
Wednesday 12 April: Orchard Meadow, Sunbury-on-Thames

Thursday 1 June: Clockhouse Lane, Ashford

For more information visit www.xplorer.org.uk or contact the Leisure Services team by email leisure@spelthorne.gov.uk or call 01784 446433.

Sing and mingle

Are you a carer? Do you enjoy singing or want to make new friends? Sing and Mingle is a choir for carers which is light-hearted and fun, with no previous singing experience necessary.

Sessions take place at Manor Farm Wellbeing Centre, Manor Farm Lane, Egham, TW20 9HR, every Friday between 11-12pm. The Manor Farm Wellbeing Centre is able to provide respite care for a limited amount of people while their carers participate in the choir.

The dates can change so please contact Manor Farm on 01784 435278 to book your place.

Get Active 50+

Get Active 50+ provides opportunities for adults aged 50 and over to become more active. The sports on offer include badminton, bowls, cage cricket, dance/yoga/pilates, jogging, multi-sport (disability sport), table tennis, touch tennis, swimming, walking football and walking netball.

Visit www.spelthorne.gov.uk/getactive50 email leisure@spelthorne.gov.uk or call 01784 446433.

Spelthorne Arts Forum

Are you an artist living in Spelthorne? Are you a member of an arts group or do the arts play a part in your job? If you have an interest in the arts we would like to invite you to the first Spelthorne Arts Forum.

Wednesday 26 April, 7 – 9pm, in the Goddard Room at Spelthorne Borough Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames, TW18 1XB

The aims of this event are to:

- create a supportive environment for artists and organisations involved in the arts in Spelthorne
- provide an opportunity for networking with other local artists and organisations
- find out what opportunities there are for funding and development

This event is organised by Cat Learmonth, Arts Officer for Spelthorne Borough Council. Please email c.learmonth@spelthorne.gov.uk or call 01784 446453 for more information and to book your place.

WW1 Spelthorne Schools creative writing competition

Exhibition: 4 - 14 April

To mark the World War One centenary Spelthorne Council is holding a series of competitions for Spelthorne Students.

This year's competition was 'Creative Writing' and students were asked to write a letter set during World War One. Come along to Spelthorne Museum and see the excellent work created by young people in your area.

Workshop: Tuesday 11 April

Storytelling from the men and women who fought in the Great War at Staines Library, Friends Walk, Staines-upon-Thames, TW18 4PG.

At this workshop you will handle genuine artefacts from the Western Front and take part in an 'interactive logistics roleplay' game where the participants plan an attack while under fire.

Times: 11am and 2pm

Ages: Most suitable for those aged 8+

Booking: To book your place call 01784 446433 or email leisure@spelthorne.gov.uk

New waste collection vehicles are coming

From June, your food waste, textiles and small electrical items will all be collected weekly. You will be able to put these items out for collection on the same day as your rubbish and recycling and they will be collected using a new dedicated vehicle.

More information will be sent to all residents in May. If you don't already have food waste caddies, why not arrange to get yours now – see over page.

Art competition - why it is important to recycle

Competition:

- theme: 'why it is important to recycle'

- open to children up to and including 11 years of age, who live or attend school in Spelthorne
- posters should be 'landscape', no larger than A3 and hand drawn. Please use strong colours so the image will stand out
- 1st, 2nd and 3rd place posters will receive certificates and prizes. The winning design will be used to promote recycling in Spelthorne
- entries should be received by 4pm on Friday 28 April 2017 and sent to: Recycling Art Competition, White House Depot, Kingston Road, Ashford, TW15 3SE. Please include your name, age, address and email address/phone number

For more information, please email Jane Lowe at neighbourhood.services@spelthorne.gov.uk or call 01784 446411.

Spelthorne Council is unable to return entries and reserves the right to display or reproduce any of the designs without seeking individual permission.

Focus on food waste

Why do we collect food waste separately?

Good for you:

- weekly collections (rather than food being in your rubbish bin for two weeks)
- easier to keep your caddy clean than a larger rubbish bin (it can go in the dishwasher!)
- waste food is mainly kept outside (reducing smells indoors)
- you can use plastic bags to line your food waste caddy – easier, cheaper, cleaner
- you can see how much food and money you are wasting
- it saves money for you and your council because composting is the cheapest way to dispose of food waste

Good for the environment:

- it is an environmentally friendly way to process waste food
- it is recycled to produce fertiliser; not buried or burnt
- it generates renewable energy

How do I use the food waste service?

- keep the small grey caddy in your kitchen (use a different container or keep the caddy in a cupboard if you do not like the look of it)
- line it with plastic bags (or compostable liners/newspaper if you prefer)
- use for any food waste e.g. fruit/vegetable peelings, teabags, egg shells, bones

- when it is full, tie the bag and put it in your large green caddy which is kept outside
- make sure you keep your outside caddy locked by putting the handle down at the front of the bin
- put your large green caddy next to your wheelie bin by 6am on your normal recycling/rubbish collection day

Where can I get liners from?

- use any plastic bag e.g. small pedal bin liners (you can buy these in rolls of 50 or 100 from supermarkets or hardware stores) or reuse carrier bags
- always remove your food from all packaging/plastic film – only the liners can be removed prior to the composting process

How do I get caddies if I don't already have them?

You can collect indoor and outdoor caddies from the Council Offices, Staines Community Centre, Fordbridge Community Centre, Greeno Community Centre or Benwell Community Centre.

Alternatively, please fill in the online form at www.spelthorne.gov.uk/food-waste or call 01784 446411.

Visit www.spelthorne.gov.uk/food-waste for more information or email neighbourhood.services@spelthorne.gov.uk

Which Council?

Contact Spelthorne Council for advice on the following:-

Abandoned vehicles
 Allotments
 Building regulations
 Business rates
 Car parks and parking
 Council Tax collection
 Council Tax benefit
 Conservation and protecting Green Belt land
 Day centres
 Dog fouling
 Elections
 Environmental health
 Fly tipping
 Grass cutting
 Housing register
 Housing Benefit
 Leisure activities/play

Leisure centres
Licensing
Meals on Wheels
Parks and open spaces
Pest control
Planning applications
Pollution
Rubbish, recycling, garden waste and food waste
SPAN (personal alarms)
Spelride (accessible transport)

Call 01784 451499
email customer.services@spelthorne.gov.uk
Website www.spelthorne.gov.uk

Contact Surrey County Council for advice on the following:-

Birth, death and marriage registration
Bus passes
Cycling proficiency
Cycle routes
Disabled parking badges
Education, school admissions, school policies
Footbridges
Footpaths, bridleways and byways
Gully cleaning
Icy roads
Libraries
Mineral extraction applications
Pavements
Potholes
Street lights, illuminated bollards and signs
Roads and public transport
Social services
Surrey Fire and Rescue Service
Trading standards
Waste policies
Youth clubs
Zebra crossings

Telephone: 0300 200 1001
email: contact.centre@surreycc.gov.uk
Website: www.surreycc.gov.uk

The Spelthorne Business Plan Competition 2017

Many people have a great business idea but few go on to make it happen. The Spelthorne Business Plan Competition could help you do exactly that.

MP for Spelthorne, Kwasi Kwarteng, is hosting his 4th annual competition aimed at encouraging budding entrepreneurs. Enter the competition and tell us about your business idea for a chance to win £3,500 plus mentoring support and free website and logo design.

The five best entries will be asked to present their business plan to a panel of expert judges at a Dragons' Den style final hosted at BP on 25 May 2017.

Entries are welcome from individuals or teams of up to four people. To enter or for more details visit www.spelthorne.gov.uk/businesscomp or search 'Spelthorne Business Plan Competition' on Facebook. The competition is open to Spelthorne residents, aged over 16. Applications must be received by 14 April 2017.

For more details, please email Tracey Carter at tracey.carter@parliament.uk

Businesses back the BID

Businesses in Staines-upon-Thames have given a clear endorsement for the introduction of a Business Improvement District (BID) that will generate over £1.5m over 5 years to be invested in town centre projects.

Local businesses took part in a ballot in December and over 76% of votes cast supported the introduction of a BID. The turnout was 45% which is slightly above the national average for towns that have held BID ballots.

The £1.5m will be generated by businesses within the BID area contributing a levy between 0.75% and 1.5% of their rateable value and will be used for initiatives which increase visitor numbers.

Cllr Colin Barnard, Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development, said: "Spelthorne Borough Council backed the Staines BID from the start with a contribution of £50k in the first 18 months. The BID will surely improve the competitiveness of the town against neighbouring shopping destinations and raise its profile as a great place to shop, work and live. Staines-upon-Thames continues to punch above its weight and it's great to see businesses are confident about investing in the future of the town."

For more info visit www.staines-upon-thames.bid visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/businessimprovement-districts> or call Michelle Baker on 07527 016338.

Better Neighbourhood Grants

Dozens of good causes and community initiatives benefit every year from nearly £40,000 donated by Spelthorne councillors to improve their neighbourhoods. In the past year, grants have been made in support of school and sports club facilities; help for vulnerable older people; towards running a winter shelter for homeless people and environmental improvements such as tree-planting and floral baskets.

One of the most generous contributions was a joint donation organised by Cllr Maureen Attewell, Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing, to bring Christmas seasonal cheer to the Borough's Meals on Wheels recipients. She gathered donations totalling more than £2,000 from fellow councillors, to buy Christmas gifts and treats for those who use the service all year round.

She said: "At a time when funding for older people's services is increasingly under threat, we wanted to add some festive cheer for our Meals on Wheels customers to let them know they're in our thoughts. These grants can go a long way to uplifting people's lives in simple ways."

Anyone whose cause could do with a cash boost is invited to approach their ward councillors and request support from the Better Neighbourhood Grants fund. Each councillor has £1,000 to spend in the financial year up to March 2018.

To be eligible for a grant, the cause or project has to meet certain criteria such as being of benefit to Spelthorne residents and supporting the council's priorities – ward councillors have all the details. Visit www.spelthorne.gov.uk and click on 'Your Council' to find your ward councillor.

Staines Players presents

Prescription for Murder by Norman Robbins, at Stanwell Village Hall

- Wednesday 29 March: 7.45pm
- Friday 31 March: 7.45pm
- Saturday 1 April: 2.30pm and 7.45pm

Tickets £10, concessions £9.

Book online at www.stainesplayers.com or call 01932 561971.

Spring art open day

Saturday 1 April, 10am-2pm

Come along to the Resource Centre Staines Park, Commercial Road, TW18 2QJ, and have fun with your children making spring-themed crafts. Entry fee £1 per child (50p for siblings). No need to book.

www.spelthorne.gov.uk/resourcecentre

Join us for the following events at Spelthorne Museum

- Roman Spring Festival - Saturday 1 April, 11am - 3pm
- Spelthorne's Stone Age Secrets - Saturday 15 July, 11am - 3pm

Entry and activities are free. Spelthorne Museum, 1 Elmsleigh Road, Staines TW18 4PM (access is via Staines Library).

Call 01784 461804 for more details.

Shepperton Village Fair

This year's annual Shepperton Village Fair is being held on Saturday 10 June from 12-5pm.

Held close to the Thames on Manor Park, the Fair kicks off with a large procession at 11.15am through the High Street, followed by spectacular arena displays, fairground rides, stalls, competitions and the famous Great Nauticalia Raft Race. The Fair is organised by Shepperton volunteers and supported by local charities, organisations and businesses.

For details visit www.shepperton-fair.org or email enquiries@shepperton-fair.org

Staines-upon-Thames Day

On Sunday 25 June Staines will come alive with a fun-filled programme of events and activities taking place in Memorial Gardens, the Market Square and the High Street.

From 11am until 5pm the day will be filled with live music and dance performances on the main stage, pony rides, fairground attractions, bird displays, arts and craft stalls and the Mayor's Parade. And don't forget to head to the River for dragon boat and duck racing, kayaking taster sessions and boat rides.

Applications for stall holders, dragon boat teams, and performers are now open - email info@stainesuponthamesday.co.uk to get involved.

Thanks to support from Spelthorne Council and sponsorship from local businesses, Staines-upon-Thames Day is free to attend.

Visit www.stainesuponthamesday.co.uk for the full timetable of events.

Surrey County Council elections 2017

Surrey County Council elections are being held on Thursday 4 May 2017. If you are not already registered to vote, visit www.gov.uk/register-to-vote before 13 April to make an application.

As well as being used for elections, the Electoral Register is also used by credit referencing agencies to check where people live when they apply for any form of credit such as a mortgage, loan or hire purchase agreement. Residents who are not on the Electoral Register may find it more difficult to obtain credit.

Polling stations will be open from 7am to 10pm on Thursday 4 May. If you are unable to get to the Polling Station you can apply for a postal vote. The deadline for new postal vote applications or cancelling existing arrangements is 5pm on 18 April. Alternatively you can appoint a proxy to vote on your behalf and the deadline for this is 25 April.

Contact the Electoral Services team by email at electoral.services@spelthorne.gov.uk or call 01784 444218.

Improving Sunbury Cross

The underpass at Sunbury Cross has undergone a make-over thanks to work carried out by Spelthorne's Community Safety team and the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Prior to the improvements being made, students from Sunbury Manor were asked to complete a survey which asked for their views on the underpass and any concerns they may have about using it. The results provided lots of useful information which helped the Council and its partners decide what should be improved.

With help from the Probation Service's Community Payback team, the underpass was first given a deep clean to address concerns the children had raised about the appearance of the area. The signs in and around the underpass, around 30 in total, were replaced, as many were in poor condition and several sections of wooden fencing were also repaired.

For more details contact Paul Smith or Paul Farrow by email at community.safety@spelthorne.gov.uk or call 01784 446322.

Bridge Street car park development

It was announced last December that Bellway Homes has decided not to go ahead with plans to purchase and redevelop the Council owned car park located on Bridge Street in Staines-upon-Thames.

The Council is considering its options for the site and will keep the car park open for the time being. More details will be given in future editions of the Bulletin.

For more details contact Heather Morgan by email at h.morgan@spelthorne.gov.uk or call 01784 446352.

Greening your front garden

Is your front garden all grey and no green? Have you considered that your front garden, no matter how urban the setting, could help reduce pollution levels and the risk of flooding and provide a place for nature to thrive.

The RHS has produced a front garden guide as part of their Greening Grey Britain campaign which shows how you can create a front garden, no matter how small, that can be practical, allow parking and still be green.

Visit www.spelthorne.gov.uk/greenyourgarden

Allotments now available

Want to grow your own fruit and vegetables? We have allotment plots available so get in touch if you are interested in renting one.

email customer.services@spelthorne.gov.uk or call 01784 451449.

Warm Home Discount Scheme

If you live in a Park Home and are on benefits, you can now apply for a one-off payment of £140 towards your energy bills under the Warm Home Discount Scheme.

Visit www.parkhomeswhd.com or call 03303 801040 for the eligibility criteria and to apply. Don't delay as the scheme will close once a certain number of applications have been received.

Help to heat your home

Action Surrey offer a range of grants to help residents insulate their home, install draught-proofing and fit new heating boilers.

To find out more please visit www.actionsurrey.org or call 0800 783 2503.

Follow Neighbourhood Services

For the latest news from Neighbourhood Services on the environment, waste and recycling, flood resilience, allotments, grants and more, follow us on twitter at @SpelthorneSt

Electric vehicle charge points

Spelthorne Council has secured funding to install Electric Vehicle (EV) charge points in some of our public car parks as part of a plan to support low carbon travel and help reduce pollution from car emissions. More details will be published in the summer edition of the Bulletin.

Go green with your garden waste

Now spring has finally arrived and you can get back in the garden, remember that you have three easy options for your garden waste:

- home composting – this is the most environmentally-friendly option as your garden waste rots down to produce a nutritious compost. Buy a compost bin from www.recycleforsurrey.org.uk for just £13
- garden waste collection service - subscribe today and have your garden waste collected every two weeks from the kerbside. To find out more visit www.spelthorne.gov.uk/gwform or ring Customer Services on 01784 451499
- Shepperton Community Recycling Centre – bring your garden waste for free

Please don't put garden waste in your rubbish or recycling bin!

Bank holiday refuse collections

Rubbish and recycling collections take place as usual on all bank holidays with the exception of Christmas and New Year when we publish revised dates in the Bulletin and on our website.

Thanks to eco-volunteers

A big thanks to all the volunteers, including those from Spelthorne Natural History Society and Egham and Staines Conservation Volunteers, who helped to clear part of Staines Moor in January. The project, run by Spelthorne Council and Thames Water, is helping to open up the natural water features and create new reed habitats which will attract wildlife to the area.

If you are interested in volunteering to help with similar projects, contact the Council's Countryside and Commons Officer, Steve Price, by email at s.price@spelthorne.gov.uk or call 01784 446415.

Community emergency plans

Spelthorne Council, in partnership with the Environment Agency and Surrey County Council, is helping communities to write their own emergency plans for events such as flooding, severe weather and other emergency situations. So far the Council has worked with more than 15 groups across Staines, Laleham, Shepperton and Lower Sunbury. Most of the groups start by writing a flood plan which can then be used as the basis for other emergency situations. The plans focus on:-

- understanding the risks and trigger points for the area
- enabling individuals to take steps to make homes and communities more resilient
- identifying and utilising skills and resources within the community
- providing lead contacts for both the community and the responding agencies

If you would like to know more about writing an emergency plan or if there is already a community emergency plan for your area please contact us.

Contact the Environment team by email at environment@spelthorne.gov.uk or call 01784 446440.

Moooving in

A small herd of cows will be making their return to Sunbury Park between April and September as part of the Council's ongoing work to improve the area's biodiversity. A number of wildflower beds are also being introduced.

For details visit www.spelthorne.gov.uk/cows or call 01784 446415.

Don't get fined for fly-tipping

If you arrange for someone to dispose of your waste you are obliged to check that the person or company you use holds a permit from the Environment Agency. If your waste is found fly-tipped and is tracked back to you, you may receive a £400 fixed penalty notice or be prosecuted. The Magistrates Court can impose fines of up to £5000 and the Crown Court has powers to issue unlimited fines and even imprison offenders.

Here are some tips:

- ensure that any person who takes your waste is licensed - check the register at www.gov.uk/access-the-public-register-for-environmental-information
- ask the waste carrier to provide you with their full address and telephone number
- ask to see the waste carrier's licence and take a photo of it
- ensure that the waste carrier provides you with a waste transfer notice
- if you are using a builder, ensure it is clear in your contract who is responsible for removing the waste

The Council actively pursues fly-tippers and recently prosecuted a man from Staines-upon-Thames who dumped building waste he had been paid to take away. He received a suspended prison sentence and was ordered to carry out 200 hours of unpaid community work.

For more information please visit www.spelthorne.gov.uk/fly-tipping or call 01784 446441.